

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6972

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: POLITICAL PARTIES MOVE TOWARD EARLY ELECTION

REF: ANKARA 2169 (DTG 250705Z MAR 77)

1. DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, TURKEY'S TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES -- THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) OF PRIMIN DEMIREL AND THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) OF FORMER PRIMIN ECEVIT -- HAVE JOINED IN AN UNEASY COOPERATIVE EFFORT TO MOVE THE DATE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS FROM THE SCHEDULED TIME IN OCTOBER TO JUNE, 1977. AS NOTED REFTTEL, BOTH PARTIES PUBLICLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES LAST WEEK TO EARLY ELECTIONS. THE MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE OPPOSED TO THIS ACTION IS NATIONAL
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SALVATION PARTY (NSP) CHAIRMAN ERBAKAN, WHO HAS VOWED TO OBSTRUCT IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY THE MOVE TOWARD EARLY ELECTIONS. ERBAKAN'S FIRST OBSTRUCTIONIST TACTIC WAS TO REFUSE TO ATTEND MEETINGS LAST WEEK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WHICH, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ASSEMBLY BY-LAWS, WAS TO HAVE CONSIDERED THE EARLY ELECTION PROPOSAL. THIS TACTIC WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THE COMMITTEE WAS

UNABLE TO MEET.

2. THE RPP AND JP, AFTER SOME PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT ABOUT THE BEST WAY TO CIRCUMVENT ERBAKAN'S EFFORTS, DECIDED EARLIER THIS WEEK TO SEEK TO CHANGE THE ASSEMBLY BY-LAWS TO ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CONSIDER AN EARLY ELECTION PROPOSAL. ON MARCH 29, THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE BY-LAWS WAS PRESENTED TO AND PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE OVER THE OBJECTION OF THE NSP MEMBERS. TODAY, MARCH 31, THE PROPOSED BY-LAWS CHANGE IS EXPECTED TO GO TO THE FLOOR OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR APPROVAL. ASSUMING ERBAKAN IS UNABLE TO OBSTRUCT THIS PROPOSED CHANGE DURING THE MARCH 31 ASSEMBLY MEETING, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE RPP AND JP NOW PLAN TO PRESENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON APRIL 4 A MOTION TO CHANGE THE ELECTION DATE FROM OCTOBER TO JUNE. IF, AS THE JP AND RPP EXPECT, THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED ON APRIL 4, THE DATE OF ELECTIONS WILL BE JUNE 5.

3. ERBAKAN HAS SAID HE WILL CONTINUE HIS OBSTRUCTIONIST TACTICS, HOWEVER. POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION OPEN TO HIM INCLUDE: A) SUBMISSION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE PROPOSALS BEING CONSIDERED AT THE ASSEMBLY SESSIONS MARCH 31 AND APRIL 4; B) REFUSAL TO SIGN THE MINISTERIAL DECREE ANNOUNCING THE CHANGE IN THE ELECTION DATE (THIS IS REQUIRED BY THE BY-LAWS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY); AND C) AN APPEAL TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT. ERBAKAN'S DETERMINATION TO RESORT TO ANY OF THESE TACTICS MAY BE OPEN TO QUESTION, HOWEVER, SINCE AT THE SAME TIME HE WAS PUBLICLY REASSERTING HIS INTENTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO OBSTRUCT THE MOVE TOWARD EARLY ELECTIONS, HE ALSO NOTIFIED HIS PARTY ORGANIZATION TO BE PREPARED TO ENTER EARLY ELECTIONS. MOST OBSERVERS (APPARENTLY INCLUDING ERBAKAN) BELIEVE THAT IF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, WHICH HAVE A COMBINED STRENGTH OF 354 SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ARE SINCERE IN THEIR DESIRE TO HAVE ELECTIONS IN JUNE (A SINCERITY THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO PARTIES IS SURE EXISTS IN THE OTHER.), ERBAKAN, WHOSE PARTY HAS 48 SEATS, WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO PREVENT THEM FROM HAVING THEIR WAY. PERHAPS THE PRESENT SITUATION IS BEST DESCRIBED BY A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO PRIMIN DEMIREL BY THE TURKISH PRESS MARCH 31, "EARLY ELECTIONS ARE CERTAIN-- IF THERE ARE NO SURPRISES. MACOMBER

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